

REMARKS

Summary of Amendments

With the above amendments, claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 remain in the application. Claim 8 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 17, and 19 have been amended to more distinctly claim embodiments of the invention. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite that the load lock has only one pedestal. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 17 now meet the mandate of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over US 6,251,759 to Guo et al. ("Guo") in view of US 6,270,582 to Rivkin et al. ("Rivkin").

Claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin at least for reciting: "a load-lock having only one pedestal configured to support a single wafer thereon." Guo does not disclose or suggest the use of a load lock with only one pedestal. Neither does Rivkin. In Rivkin, what is referred to as a "pedestal" is actually a bottom plate in that it does not support a wafer (see Rivkin, column 6, lines 1-14). In Rivkin, the wafers are supported on wafer seats 140 and 142 (Rivkin, FIG. 3) or 182 and 184 (Rivkin, FIG. 4), not on the "pedestal." In the present application, the pedestal serves as a wafer support in that the wafer is supported by the pedestal itself (see Specification, page 7, lines 5 to 12). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin.

Claims 2-7 and 9-13 depend on claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-7 and 9-13 are patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for the

same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features set forth in these claims and in claim 1.

Similar to claim 1, claim 17 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin at least for reciting: "a load lock having only one pedestal for supporting a wafer thereon." Claims 19-21 depend on claim 17. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 19-21 are patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features set forth in these claims and in claim 17.

Conclusion

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 are in condition for allowance. If the next communication is other than a Notice Of Allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (408)436-2112.

If for any reason an insufficient fee has been paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the insufficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-2427.

Respectfully submitted,
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RCE/Response To Final Rejection

August 6, 2003

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